

**ASSESSING THE NEEDS OF
STATE AND LOCAL WORKFORCE INVESTMENT
BOARD MEMBERS**

SC WORKS

**BRINGING EMPLOYERS
AND JOB SEEKERS TOGETHER**

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In July 2012, the State Board Initiatives Unit of the SC Department of Employment and Workforce (SCDEW) surveyed various workforce partners including local workforce investment board (LWIB) members on workforce system needs and goals. Limited survey responses showed a possible need for training as a way of helping local board members better understand their roles and the responsibilities of a workforce investment board. In addition, while a set of high-performing board standards had been approved by the State Workforce Investment Board (SWIB) and implemented in the previous years, not all 12 of the LWIBs met the standard. This project was conducted to determine how best to train state and local board members, educate them on their roles and responsibilities, and increase their level of performance.

SCDEW serves as the administrative entity for the state's Workforce Investment Act (WIA) as well as other federal workforce programs (i.e., Unemployment Insurance, Trade Adjustment Assistance, Veterans, and Wagner-Peyser). As the administrative entity, SCDEW receives WIA funding from the U.S. Department of Labor and distributes it according to a formula to 12 local workforce investment areas. The agency provides policy and procedural oversight of the workforce program and monitors programmatic and financial implementation of WIA by the 12 local workforce investment boards.

Section 117 of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998, requires that a local workforce investment board be established in each local workforce investment area (LWIA) of the state. Chief elected officials, typically board members of the area's council of governments (COG), appoint members to the local board. Local workforce investment boards are comprised of majority business leaders who are owners, chief executives or operating officers, or someone with optimum policymaking or hiring authority within a business. Other members include

representatives of local educational entities, labor organizations, community-based organizations, and economic development agencies.

Local boards must also include representatives of each of the one-stop partners (*See Appendix for a list of required partners*). Business, education, and labor members on the board have to be nominated by their respective organizations (e.g., chamber of commerce, regional educational agencies, and labor federations). Not all 12 LWIBs in the state follow this composition as some of them may be grandfathered Private Industry Councils formed under the preceding federal workforce program – JTPA (Job Training Partnership Act).

At the state level, there is also a workforce investment board. The State Workforce Investment Board follows a similar composition as the local board structure. SWIB members are primarily business leaders and the chair is selected among the business members by the Governor. Other members include legislators from the South Carolina Senate and House, local elected officials, workforce partners, and representatives of community-based organizations. WIA law does require that nominations be received from business/trade associations and the state's labor federation; however, not all one-stop partners are required members of the board. Members of the SWIB are appointed by and work on behalf of the Governor. Fundamentally, the State Board acts in the following manner:

- Advises on development and continuous improvement of the state's workforce development system.
- Provides direction on workforce development issues, particularly those pertaining to implementation of the Workforce Investment Act.
- Provides guidance on SC Works Center (one-stop) service delivery and to the 12 local workforce investment boards.

Local workforce investment boards also play a critical role in implementing particular workforce programs at the local level. The Workforce Investment Act also outlines eight

functions of a local board which include developing a local strategic workforce investment plan, establishing a budget to carryout prescribed duties, identifying a one-stop operator, and collaborating with economic development and business. It is the LWIBs that make decisions about training and employment activities which ultimately affect the unemployment rate and businesses' ability to prosper through the successes of its workforce.

With the highly important roles and responsibilities of both the State and Local Workforce Investment Boards, having sufficiently trained board members who can adequately perform is essential. Using board members responses to a survey based on the Binder Six Boxes Model[®], it is anticipated that the outcomes of this project will show if there is a need for additional training and how to continuously improve board member performance.

DATA COLLECTION

To gather specific data as it relates to board member roles, responsibilities, and expected performance, a survey was developed based on the *Binder Six Boxes Model*. Utilizing the Binder Six Boxes Model in developing the survey, allows one to go beyond identifying whether there is a need for training but to determine how best to improve board member performance on State and Local workforce investment boards. Through studies on performance-based management, “It ha[s] become clear that while effective training could have a significant impact on human performance, it seldom work[s] alone (Binder, pg 1).”

In 1978, the *Behavior Engineering Model* was formulated by Thomas F. Gilbert, the founder of the field of performance technology also known as Human Performance Technology. Gilbert's model provided the framework to systematically identify barriers to individual and organizational performance. The Behavior Engineering Model creates a distinction between an

individual's repertory of behavior (what the individual brings to the performance equation) and the environmental supports (the work environment factors that encourage or impede performance) (Chevalier, pg 1).

During the early 1990's, Carl Binder, a student of both B.F. Skinner and Thomas F. Gilbert, reformulated Gilbert's Behavior Engineering Model to make it more comprehensible and easier to apply by corporate executives and managers within their organizations. Changes to the model included modifications to the language and simplifications to the model itself. Some years later, Binder's model was trademarked as The Six Boxes™.

The Six Boxes™			
Environmental Supports	Expectations and Feedback: This category includes information provided to performers about what they are expected to accomplish, under what conditions, and how they are performing in relation to those expectations.	Tools and Resources: Covers not only the particular tools used to perform work and the work processes themselves, but also such resources as expert consultants, reference documentation, and user interfaces.	Consequences and Incentives: Includes both intended and inadvertent consequences of behavior, both monetary and non-monetary. This may involve negative consequences built into the work process, such as failure by other departments to fulfill orders which punish doing the right thing. It may also include informal social consequences, positive or negative.
Person's Repertory of Behavior	Skills and Knowledge: Includes training and non-training interventions designed to produce skills and knowledge in the individual. (Notice that job aids might be thought of as an intervention in the Tools and Resources category intended to support Skills and Knowledge.)	Capacity (Selection and Assignment): This category is about the things the individual brings to the job that the organization cannot be expected to provide (e.g., personal qualities, social skills, etc.), and that the organization manages through optimal selection of people and assignment to jobs, based on their capacity.	Motives and Preferences: This box encompasses attitude toward one's job and factors that comprise employee satisfaction. It includes personal preferences for type of work, available incentives, the working environment, and so on.

Source: *Updating the Behavior Engineering Model.* <http://www.aboutiwp.com/Updating%20BEM.pdf>

Survey questions for state and local workforce investment board members were constructed based on each of the six categories of the Binder Model as a means of gauging board member performance gaps and areas of opportunity. The Likert Scale was used to measure responses for nine (9) questions, 1 equaling strongly disagree to 5 being strongly agree. The survey instrument also consisted of five (5) open-ended questions and three (3) demographic questions. The survey was distributed to the 31-member State Workforce Investment Board in addition to members of the 12 local workforce investment boards (roughly 25 members each), for a total distribution of more than 331 individuals. *See Appendix for the State and Local Workforce Investment Board Survey.*

DATA ANALYSIS

There were 136 responses to the survey from 31 State Board members and 115 Local Board members. Of approximately 331 individuals surveyed, this equated to a 41% response rate which is very good. Most (30%) individuals have been a part of a workforce board for 1-2 years, 22% for 5 or more years, and 18% for 3-4 years. Respondents were representative of workforce board composition, that being majority business. Nearly half of all respondents were in the business membership category, 13% were education, 11% community-based organization, and the remaining respondents fell into various categories such as state agencies, one-stop partners, economic development, etc.

Based on survey responses, the majority (75%) of individuals very clearly understand his/her role as a workforce board member and feel that performance expectations of the board have been clearly communicated (76% of respondents). When asked, “How did you learn what was needed to be successful as a board member,” the majority of LWIB as well as SWIB

members indicated that they learned through board orientations and trainings. Although there is no standardized orientation for all 12 of the LWIBs, members are educated on the purpose of WIA and the functions of a local workforce investment board according to the law. State Workforce Investment Board members also receive an *SWIB Member Guide* and receive a group or individual orientation as needed.

The possible effectiveness of the orientation is illustrated in board member responses to the question, “I have acquired the necessary knowledge to successfully perform as a board member:” 77% agreed/strongly agreed; 7% disagreed/strongly disagreed; and 17% were neutral.

Survey results also show that both State and Local board members learn to be successful by doing such things as attending board meetings, serving on committees, reading information, and devoting personal time to learning. An informal, yet valuable, way board members also learn is through discussions and conversations with other board members, particularly the board chair and veteran members of the boards, and workforce partners. SWIB and LWIB members also frequently stated that they learn by asking questions and through dialogue with staff.

To help determine additional resources that should be available to board members in the future, respondents were asked if an online training program and workforce information would enhance their knowledge. An overwhelming majority of all board members concluded, “Yes.” Many mentioned that the online training should include the roles and responsibilities of the WIBs, policies, and state and local organizational charts.

Respondents were also asked to identify other ways board member knowledge can be enhanced. Although most State Board members offered no response, several indicated that clear, timely information should be provided before a meeting. There also needs to be better State and Local Board collaboration which is also reflected in some of the LWIB member comments.

Several SWIB members also feel that having a better understanding of the barriers the unemployed face can enhance their knowledge as well as meeting more at the committee level and attending workforce related conferences and seminars.

Quite a few LWIB members indicated that their knowledge can be enhanced through education sessions such as seminars, retreats, and refresher trainings at the state and/or local level. During educational sessions they would like to hear of national, state, and local best practices as well as failures. Local Board members also want information to be shared on happenings and felt that newsletters can be a means to share such information. Some members want more education or better explanation of workforce programs, services, and funding. A few noted that it would be good to hear directly from their elected officials and program participants and to tour local industry. Online learning and a website portal were mentioned as good ways to enhance knowledge, but any information shared should be easily accessible, available, and current.

When it comes to receiving sufficient information and timely feedback to help make decisions and adequately perform as a board member, the majority (72%) of State and Local WIB members do agree or strongly agree. However, 22% were neutral. These individuals may have been unsure of how to respond because they may not know what information they should be receiving in order to rate whether or not what they are given is sufficient. Survey responses to a separate but related question are also somewhat reflective of this possibility. Some 17% of board members neither agreed nor disagreed on whether materials and tools provided are easily accessible and understandable. The majority (77%) of members, however, do agree on this matter compared to 7% not agreeing that board member and workforce materials/tools are easily accessible and understandable.

Both State and Local board members - 79% of them - do feel like they are able to provide performance feedback to board staff in a confidential, non-confrontational manner. In this area, only 11% of respondents were neutral, and only 10% disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Survey questions also focused on incentives and individual motivation for being on a workforce investment board. Responses to the question, "I receive sufficient recognition for volunteer services within my local area," show that 59% of State and Local board members agree or strongly agree with this statement, while 27% are neutral and 13% disagree/strongly disagree. Local board members are considerably more likely than State board members to feel like they have sufficient local level recognition. Conversely, State board members are more likely to feel like there is sufficient recognition at the state level or by the State WIB for their volunteer efforts. The majority of both State and Local board members do feel that their board has been adequately recognized for positive performance.

The final survey questions were open-ended and inquired about the personal benefits one experiences in being a part of a workforce investment board and what motives him/her to be a member of a workforce board. State Board members most frequently mentioned that the most rewarding part of being a SWIB member is working with others, being a part of decision making/interacting with decision makers, and networking. State Board members also indicated that it is rewarding to be a part of solutions to problems and to make a difference. It is also satisfying for them to see progress. At least two board members spoke of the SC Work Ready Communities Initiative/WorkKeys as being rewarding for them.

For an overwhelming number of Local Board members, their gratification comes through witnessing the success of participants in the WIA and other workforce programs. These members enjoy hearing how individuals overcome obstacles to receive training and become self-

sufficient. Local board participation also provides an opportunity to give back, make a difference, and help others (e.g., youth). Like State Board members, Local Board members also find it rewarding to network, collaborate, and work together on efforts. Although not frequently stated, another interesting reward for some members is being aware of information or being able to provide helpful information to the community. This may lend to fact that a variety of workforce and community partners are required members of the local boards.

Both State and Local Board members are motivated to be on a workforce investment board by their desire to improve the workforce, to be a solution to helping reduce unemployment in our state. State Board members, which deal more systematically or on a macro-level, want to help create a more efficient workforce system. Local Board members want to provide people with the proper education and training and improve their communities and local areas, to include businesses and the education system. Many State Board members mentioned that they are motivated to help businesses, especially small businesses, and to attract new business and promote job growth. LWIB members frequently stated that they were motivated to be a part of the workforce board because of job responsibilities, to represent needs/interests, and to have a voice.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Responses from the *Assessing the Needs of Workforce Investment Board Members* survey have provided guidance on how to help workforce board members be more effective and to adequately perform. There are also some identifiable areas of improvement related to environmental supports that contribute to board members' on the job performance. Outlined below is an implementation plan to address these matters.

Action Steps

- Develop an Online Workforce Investment Board Training that is brief, interactive, and informative. Modules would include the following:
 - State and local workforce program organizational/administrative structure
 - Overview of the Workforce Investment Act
 - Functions and responsibilities of a State WIB and Local WIB
 - Funding flow and financial management
 - One-Stop operation
 - Workforce stakeholders and their roles
 - Overview of various workforce programs and the administration of them
- Develop a WIB Newsletter/Update the Workforce Investment Board website portal to include easy-to-understand and relevant information such as acronyms, unemployment data, workforce trends, etc. and quarterly newsletter recognizing board members and to include other information.
- Hold a forum at least twice a year for State and Local Board Members to interact/network, share best practices, hear partner presentations, and to recognize Workforce Investment Board and Board member services.
- Hold at least two trainings for State and Local WIB members: 1) Refresher training on workforce board roles, responsibilities, and expectations and 2) National best practices.

Timeframes and Cost

- Online Workforce Investment Board Training is already underway and should be finalized within the next 9 months. Costs associated with developing the training are staff time to format the training and staff and volunteer board member time to critique and improve the training prior to publishing.

- Workforce Investment Board Newsletter/Website Portal can be developed, restructured, and updated within 3-6 months with on-going updates on a monthly basis. The newsletter will be sent quarterly. Costs to compose a newsletter will require staff time and to update the website with information will also require staff time which is often limited as we only currently have one person in the Division capable of updating the website. There may be opportunities to cross-train others; however, acquiring needed website training may be financially unfeasible.
- At least one Workforce Board Member Forum can be implemented by the end of 2013 with two being planned for 2014. To host a forum will require facility space large enough to hold at least 150 people. When conducting State Workforce Investment Board or public meetings, it has typically been our practice to find facilities that have no to nominal meeting space fees. Anticipated costs would include State and Local Board member travel to Columbia (56.5 cents per mile reimbursement), refreshments (approx. \$200), and possibly lunch at \$7 per person.
- Workforce Board Training will be conducted during the 2013 Workforce Development Partnership Symposium being held May 13-15th. During the conference, there will be a WIB member track with workshops covering WIB roles and responsibilities as well as information on what other states and local areas are doing nationally.

Potential Obstacles and Methods to Overcome Them

No major obstacles are anticipated. Limited staff, workload challenges, and staff time outside of required, core duties may hamper progress. Although federal workforce programs are facing sequestration and reductions, financial restraints are not expected to severely impact completing the implementation plan. Funding has been set-aside for training; however, when

budget cuts are looming, the amount of funding available for training is usually the first to be limited. Another potential problem or setback may be reauthorization of WIA. WIA reauthorization could drastically alter how workforce programs are administered causing any actions to be halted, amended, or completely redone.

Communication with Key Stakeholders

Staff to the State Workforce Investment Board and the 12 Local Workforce Investment Boards will be made aware of survey results and discussions will be held of how staff can help improve board performance (e.g., providing information in a clear and timely manner to better aid in decision making) and the proposed action and implementation plan. During the next SWIB Executive Committee meeting, members will be briefed on survey responses and the implementation plan. A request for assistance to implement, support, and review actions steps and/or final products will be made to State Board members as well as Local Board members. During the next full State WIB meeting, all members will be given an overview of findings and action steps. This information will also be helpful to the staff of the local boards.

Integration into Standard Operating Procedure

Once action items of the implementation plan are completed, they will become a part of standard operating procedures and will be updated as needed. Board members and staff will know what information is consistently available and where to find it.

EVALUATION METHOD

A formal and informal evaluation process will be used to assess the effectiveness of the four proposed solutions: Online Workforce Investment Board Training,

Workforce Investment Board Newsletter/Website Portal, Workforce Board Member Forum, and Workforce Board Training. For any trainings, staff and/or board members will review training components prior to implementation. Following any trainings, an evaluation form will be given to attendees, and responses will be tallied and analyzed to determine if the training provided a learning opportunity, is applicable, and needs any modifications or improvements. In hosting a forum for State and Local Board members, feedback about the forum will be solicited through conversations and comments and a formal survey tool, particularly following the first forum. An evaluation of the information on the website portal will also be collected through informal requests for feedback.

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

State and Local Workforce Investment Boards in South Carolina and nationally play a very important role when it comes to the workforce system, businesses, jobseekers, and workers. Their influence on policy and the workforce system structure can assist in lowering the unemployment rate, helping businesses grow and remain viable, getting people trained for available jobs, and helping families become self-sufficient. Yet, the functions of the State WIB and the 12 Local Workforce Investment Boards often become unclear and confusing within the spider web of government programs.

Survey results show that the majority of workforce investment board members believe that they do understand their roles and responsibilities and have the tools and information they need to do their job well; however, more can be done in these areas to improve effectiveness. Particularly, when it comes to new board members easy-to-understand, clear, accessible information can be beneficial in helping them to understand their role on the workforce board

and what it takes to successfully perform. The majority of workforce board members have a business acumen and are very intelligent. Unfortunately, because the workforce boards oversee government programs, the language and concepts are often complex and require a greater level of training than what would be required to actively participate on a typical nonprofit board. State and local workforce investment board members are passionate, motivated volunteers and more should be done to show appreciation for their time and the work that they do. Through this Certified Public Manager project, the needs of State and Local Workforce Investment Board members have been thoroughly assessed and reasonable solutions to help them become more effective have been formulated and can soon be implemented.

REFERENCES

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APPENDIX

The goal of the One-Stop service delivery system is to make a comprehensive range of employment, training, and related services accessible in one location. The Workforce Investment Act (WIA) requires the participation of relevant programs administered by the Department of Labor and by the Departments of Agriculture, Education, Health and Human Services, and Housing and Urban Development. The law specifies required and optional partners that must coordinate their programs and services through One-Stop Centers.

Required One-Stop Partners

- WIA Title I Programs
 - Adult
 - Dislocated Workers
 - Youth
 - Job Corps
 - Native Americans
 - Migrant and Seasonal Farm Workers
 - Veterans'
- Wagner-Peyser Act Programs
- Adult Education and Literacy Programs
- Vocational Rehabilitation Programs
- Welfare-to-Work Programs
- Title V Older Workers (Senior community service employment activities)
- Post-secondary Vocational Education under the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technological Education Act
- Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) & NAFTA TAA under the Trade Act of 1974
- Local Veterans Employment Programs
- Community Services Block Grant employment and training activities
- Housing and Urban Development employment and training activities
- Unemployment Insurance

<http://www.doleta.gov/programs/factsht/pdf/onestoppartners.pdf>

Assessing the Needs of Workforce Investment Board Members Survey Questions

Information
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Do you clearly understand your role as a workforce investment board member? 2. Have performance expectations of the Board been clearly communicated to you? 3. Are you given sufficient and timely feedback and information to help you make decisions and adequately perform as a board member? 4. Are you able to provide performance feedback to staff in a confidential, non-confrontational manner (e.g., through a survey)?
Knowledge/Skills
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How did you learn what was needed to be successful as a board member? 2. Do you have the necessary knowledge to be a successful board member?
Resources
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Do you have the materials, tools, and assistance needed to successfully serve as a board member? 2. Are the materials and tools easily accessible and understandable? 3. Would an online training program and workforce information enhance your knowledge? 4. In what other ways can your knowledge be enhanced?
Capacity
<p><i>No questions asked in this dimension as local board members are nominated and then approved by chief elected officials (i.e., county council members) of their area. State board members are chosen by the Governor. Membership representation is determined for both the State and local workforce boards based on the Workforce Investment Act.</i></p>
Incentives
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Do you receive sufficient recognition for your volunteer services within your local area? 2. Do you receive sufficient recognition for your volunteer services at the state level or by the SWIB? 3. Has your Board been adequately recognized for positive performance? 4. What benefits have you personally experienced in being a part of a workforce investment board?
Motives
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What motivates you in being a member of a workforce investment board?